Mary B. Avinger. Choices in the Wilderness: The Effect of Gender on Robinsonades. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April, 2006. 56 pages. Advisor: Brian Sturm

The purpose of this content analysis was to determine if the plot divisions of wilderness survival novels, or Robinsonades, written for young adults differ between the novels with male protagonists and those with female protagonists. Twelve novels were chosen, six with female protagonists and six with male protagonists. The novels were each broken into their plot divisions and were examined to determine how gender played a part in how the plot was developed. It was found that the gender of the protagonist does affect all of the plot divisions. Within the plot divisions the boys are generally more independent and aggressive than the girls, while the girls are generally shown as being maternal, in need of companionship, and dependent on their cultural background. However many of the female protagonists also show traits that are stereotypically associated with the male gender.

Headings:

Content Analysis – Young Adult Literature

Adolescence in Literature

Girls in Literature

Boys in Literature

Sex Role in Literature

CHOICES IN THE WILDERNESS:
THE EFFECT OF GENDER ON ROBINSONADES

by
Mary B. Avinger

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

April 2006

Approved by

_____

Brian Sturm

Contents

Introduction

In 1719 Daniel Dafoe published *Robinson Crusoe*. This novel wasn't the first story written about shipwrecked castaways but it expressed many of the imperialistic ideals prevalent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Though first written as a novel for adults, it soon became a staple of children's literature, as it was rewritten, reworked, and reinvented, many versions using the same characters and settings, others branching out and embracing younger characters that appealed more to this new audience. Maher (1988) states,

> *Crusoe's* boys'-book imitators simplify its interplay of romance and realism in order to articulate a myth of cultural superiority. They recast their Crusoes into quintessential empire builders, create islands that signify a hierarchy of culture and race, and ultimately mirror a conquering people's mythology. (p. 169)

These Robinsonades, as they began to be called, have been written through the years by authors of varying nationalities and have been translated extensively.

The educational and moral influence of *Robinson Crusoe* has had a long history. In 1762 Jean-Jacques Rousseau published *Emile: Or, On Education*. This book espoused his views on the education and training primarily of boys. It is divided into five books, each book detailing the educational needs of specific age ranges. In Book III, which spans the ages 12-15, he states,

> Since we absolutely must have books, there exists one which, to my taste, provides the most felicitous treatise on natural education. This book will be the whole library, and it will always hold a distinguished place there. It will be the text for which all our discussions on the natural sciences will serve only as a commentary. It will serve as a test of the condition of our judgment during our progress; and so long as our taste is not spoiled its reading will always pleases us.

> What, then, is the marvelous book? Is it Aristotle? Is it Pliny? Is it Buffon? No. It is *Robinson Crusoe*. (Rousseau, p.184)

Robinsonades written in later years continued the tradition of educational influence motivated possibly by Rousseau's comments concerning *Robinson Crusoe.* Maher (1988) notes "the Robinsonade also suited the immediate professional aims of boys'-book writers, who sought to enlighten as well as entertain their young audience, to educate as well as exhilarate" (p. 169) and that "evangelical writers quickly and successfully adapted the Robinsonade to quicken their young readers' religious sentiments and promote the middle station" (p. 170). With this power to both "entertain and enlighten" Robinsonades have persisted as a genre while the morals, values, and ideas they advocate have changed over time.

Gender Roles

Gender roles are socially constructed. Kimmel (2000) describes this process as "a fluid assemblage of the meanings and behaviors that we construct from the values, images, and prescriptions we find in the world around us" (p. 87). Literature is one vehicle for the construction of gender roles and the proliferation of gender stereotypes.

Ideas about gender roles vary from culture to culture and across the years. A list of traditional American gender stereotypes derived from a study conducted in 1971 includes traits that can still be recognized in literature, both written in earlier decades and today. Female traits include being insecure, dependent, passive, and domestic. Male traits include being independent, brave, adventurous, and providing (Chafetz, 1978).

There have been a number of models proposed to describe the development of gender roles in children. Most of these models agree that the development of gender

roles begins at an early age and continues throughout adolescence. Basow (1986) in her discussion of these models notes, "middle and late adolescence is a time of striving to develop a secure personal gender identity in a social context" (p. 116). If you then look to literature as an object imbued with social context, it is apparent that either intentionally or unintentionally literature can impact adolescents shaping of their gender identity.

In many ways literature written for children is geared toward specific genders. Trites (1997) believes that this separation is due to the fact that it enables children's literature to be used as ideological tools. One of the more recent ideologies espoused in children's literature is feminism. Feminist children's literature deals with empowerment of child protagonists, male or female, and overcoming oppression. This does not necessarily mean that females take on aspects of the male gender role or vice versa, although this is one option, but that child protagonists are given the power to choose what to do with their lives irrespective of their gender. As an ideology, Trites believes that the message of feminism fits well in the realm of children's literature,

> Because feminism and childhood are both imbued with issues of freedom and choice, they complement each other. Consequently, it seems only natural that so many writers for children have adopted a set of values that allows their characters to have freedoms that writers in previous generations were unable to grant their characters. (Trites, p. 2)

It is important to remember that ideologies and the issues that will be discussed in children's literature will continue to change, but that children's literature as an ideological tool will continue because of the nature of human development.

Structure of the Robinsonade

In 1975 Broich outlined the plot structure of *Robinson Crusoe*, the prototype for the Robinsonades. Regrettably this text is only available in German. Fortunately Seigl (1996) explains the structure in English. It includes six main plot divisions. These include the voyage (V_1), the initial rescue (Re_1), time living in solitude (S), time living with companionship (C), the final rescue (Re_2), and the voyage home (V_2). These divisions are bounded by his time at home before and after his time on the island. Also between Re_1 and Re_2 there is the interplay between Robinson and Nature (N).

Below is a description of the plot actions surrounding these plot divisions in *Robinson Crusoe*:

H_1 (my notation=time at home before) – Crusoe is youngest of three sons (he also has sisters, but they are barely mentioned). He never really learns a trade and eventually against the will of his parents and friends takes to a life at sea. He eventually buys a plantation in Brazil, but continues to be a sailor for economic reasons.

V_1 – On this doomed voyage the ship is struck by a storm off of the coast of South America and he and his shipmates resign themselves to death,

> We sat looking one upon another, and expecting death every moment, and every man acting accordingly as preparing for another world, for there was little or nothing more for us to do in this. (Defoe, p. 43)

Re_1 – After the shipwreck Crusoe resolves to stay alive and clings to rocks. He lives through the ordeal and gives thanks to God as the source of his deliverance. He is then able to provision himself from the wreck of the ship.

S – He goes through years of getting used to his solitude but eventually comes to terms with it after creating his own domain on the island,

> From this moment I began to conclude in my mind that it was possible for me to be more happy in this forsaken, solitary condition, than it was probable I should ever have been in any other particular state in the world. (Defoe, p. 112)

C – Later on he rescues a native man, whom he names Friday, from cannibals. Friday becomes the first subject of Crusoe's kingdom and is instructed by Crusoe to call him "Master." Crusoe then begins the process of shaping Friday into his own image of a man.

N – In terms of Nature, Crusoe from the starts sees it as an adversary and something to be conquered,

> And that which was particularly afflicting to me was, that I had no weapon either to hunt and kill any creature for my sustenance or to defend myself against any other creature that might desire to me for theirs… (Defoe, p. 47)

Consequently a large part of his time on the island is comprised of making fortifications and other defensible areas.

Re_2 – Crusoe affects his own rescue with the assistance of Friday by helping to regain a ship taken from a good captain by a mutinous crew after the promise of passage back to England.

V_2 – His return voyage home after living on the island after a little more than 28 years is uneventful.

H_2 (my notation=time at home after) – When Crusoe gets home with practically nothing he discovers his parents are dead and he can only track down two sisters and two nephews, the sons of one of his brothers, none of whom can support him. He eventually contacts the people who were holding his plantation in Brazil for him and discovers that he is in fact a rich man. In the end after all of his adventures he has become a more prosperous and successful man.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not elements of the plot structure of Robinsonades vary between stories with male protagonists and stories with female protagonists. Also, I am interested in whether or not these differences are indicative of traditional gender stereotypes or not. As the specific plots of each Robinsonade differ to some degree I will look to answer these questions that relate to the structure depicted by Broich:

- What is the background of the protagonist? ($H_{1)}$
- How does the protagonist set out for/become abandoned in the wilderness? (V_1)
- Does the protagonist do anything to save him/herself or does the protagonist survive by chance? (Re_1)
- How does the protagonist cope with the solitude? (S)
- Does the protagonist have any companionship? How is their relationship defined? (C)
- What type relationship does the protagonist have with nature? (N)
- How is the rescue/return to civilization either achieved or not? (Re_2 and V_2)
- What does the protagonist bring home from the experience? (H_2)

Literature Review

Examinations of Robinsonades appear to have been almost entirely produced from a comparative literature perspective rather than from a research-based perspective. The focus of a number of these examinations is the political aspects of the Robinsonade. In her paper discussing Fredrick Marryat's *Masterman Ready* and R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* Maher (1988) proposes that nineteenth-century Robinsonades were intended as tools spreading the "imperialist fantasy." She also states, "adventure, though read by girls, evolved into a distinctly masculine story type" (p. 169). This early adoption of the adventure genre as a vehicle for masculine ideals could explain the scarcity of contemporary Robinsonades with female protagonists.

Redden and Macdonald also see a correlation between Robinsonades, which they categorize as desert island adventures, and imperialism. In their paper they compare nineteenth-century works including Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* with contemporary works such as Alex Garland's novel *The Beach* and the Robert Zemekis film *Cast Away.* They believe that the nineteenth-century Robinsonades

> inspired some readers to seek out adventure themselves by actively contributing to the construction and maintenance of empire in distant places. For the rest, they reinforced the hegemonies of imperial culture and fueled the popular sentiments that made such activity possible. (Section 1, paragraph 10)

When compared to contemporary Robinsonades, they still see a political connection. They believe that this genre, which includes both the elements of heroism and

adventurism, is "highly relevant in contemporary western capitalist culture" (Section 3, paragraph 1). While their examination of contemporary works relied entirely on material intended for adults, it does indicate that Robinsonades still do have power and influence in today's society.

While there have been no research-based studies of Robinsonades there have been a number of studies that deal with gender in young adult novels. In her content analysis of images of women in young adult fantasy and science fiction, Du Mont (1993) notes that "children's literature has traditionally fallen behind adult literature in keeping up with literary trends, and young adult literature has lagged behind children's literature, especially regarding sexist content" (p. 11). She also notes that this trend, at least in terms of science fiction, could be due to the fact that a large proportion of science fiction fans are male and could account for the sexism found in this genre. Considering that at their most basic science fiction and fantasy literature are both just subgenres of adventure literature just like the Robinsonade, the contemporary predominance of male fans for science fiction is not surprising. It is part of the legacy of those nineteenth century adventure novels that Maher mentions.

Meuchel (1999) examined this issue from the other side in her content analysis of the stereotypes of male protagonists in young adult high fantasy novels. She notes that very little is written concerning stereotyping of male protagonists in this genre, and feels that this lack could be linked with the predominance of female stereotyping studies that resulted from the women's movement. She discovered that male and female authors do develop their male protagonists in different ways. She found that "male authors rely on personality (even if the stereotypical male-brave and intelligent). Female authors rely on

the physical characteristics of males (hair, facial features, earrings)…" (p. 29). She attributes this difference to the experience that male authors have simply by growing up male and actually experiencing it, instead of seeing it from the outside. Ultimately it still comes down to the fact that gender stereotypes are not relegated to adventure stories with female protagonists. Not only can adventure novels endorse current political views, but also they can effectively illustrate gender stereotypes which, depending upon the audience and the author, can be either positive or negative.

Considering that adventure novels for young adults can portray gender stereotypes for both sexes, it seems important to examine both in a study instead of looking at only one in isolation. By omitting the stereotypes of one gender in a study it seems almost like denying that they exist. This omission can result in an analysis that could potentially alienate a potential audience and in their minds invalidate your findings.

Research Question

How does the gender of a Robinsonade's protagonist affect elements of the story structure?

Methodology

Research Approach

Content analysis is a type of unobtrusive research. Babbie (2004) defines unobtrusive research as a method "of studying social behavior without affecting it" (p. 313). In content analysis, the researcher studies artifacts instead of individual people or groups. These artifacts include a wide range of material including novels, web pages, and movies. The purpose of unobtrusive research "is the discovery of patterns among the data, patterns that point to theoretical understandings of social life" (p. 376).

Before the researcher can begin her analysis of her chosen artifacts, she must first decide what type of content she will be analyzing. When examining a particular artifact the researcher is faced with two options: 1. Study the manifest content, "the visible, surface content" (Babbie, p.319) or 2. Study the latent content, "underlying meaning" (p.319) of the content. Studies of manifest content deal more with counting words and word groupings, which lead to a quantitative method of analysis. Studies of latent content involve more thematic issues, which lead to a qualitative method of analysis (p.319).

Content analysis is based on a coding. Coding is the process of classifying the data gathered during content analysis. In a qualitative content analysis the researcher has the option of either using prior theory to formulate their codes, a process called closed coding, or use a method called open coding, in which the researcher develops the codes that they use while examining the data. The process of coding data should always be

accompanied by memoing. Memoing is the practice of keeping notes about the decisions you make during the coding process. These memos can be used to "describe and define concepts, deal with methodological issues, or offer initial theoretical formulations" (Babbie, p. 379). These memos are essential tools helping the researcher remember the reasoning of her coding. Once the coding and memoing process is complete the researcher can examine the coded data to determine what, if any, patterns emerge.

Advantages/Disadvantages of Content Analysis

Some of the most obvious advantages of this method have to do with cost, time management, and safety. Content analysis generally doesn't require a large staff, special equipment, or the potential quandaries, ethical or behavioral, of working with human subjects. A researcher can work on a content analysis at any time of day and practically anywhere, as well as study material written in very disparate time periods. In terms of safety, if the researcher makes a mistake during a content analysis, then the raw data still exists and can be examined again without drastic impact to the study (Babbie, 2004).

The obvious disadvantage of content analysis is the fact that the researcher is limited to the study of recorded communications. If we do not have access to it, we cannot study it (Babbie, 2004).

On a slightly more complex level are the questions of reliability and validity. Reliability is "that quality of measurement method that suggests that the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomenon" (Babbie, 2004, p. G9). Validity is "a term describing a measure that accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure" (Babbie, 2004, p. G11). The degree of validity and reliability of content analysis depends on whether the researcher chooses to study

manifest content or latent content. Studies of manifest content are higher on reliability and lower on validity, while studies of latent content, like this study, are higher on validity and lower on reliability.

Sample

I first created an extensive list of survival novels using the following sources: Carpenter's (1984) *Desert Isles and Pirate Islands*, NoveList K-8, and the online catalogs of the Library of Congress and the Academic Affairs Library at UNC Chapel Hill. In the online catalogs I searched the following LC subject headings: Survival, Survival after airplane accidents, shipwrecks, etc., Wilderness survival, Castaways, Shipwrecks, and Islands. Unfortunately these subject headings are not used consistently across titles, so many titles had to be examined for acceptability.

The list was then pared down based on the availability and accessibility of the titles. The wilderness survival titles were then separated out. For the purpose of this study a wilderness survival novel is defined as a story in which the protagonists are placed in a situation where they are isolated from civilization and either trapped or lost in a wilderness setting. The setting varies from novel to novel. It could range from a setting in a lone boat in the Pacific to a setting in the wilderness of Canada. I then determined which of these novels had individual protagonists as these would most closely mirror the traditional Robinsonade, and indicated the gender of the protagonists. The resulting list contained a total of 22 titles: 16 with male protagonists and 6 with female protagonists. I selected all 6 of the titles with female protagonists and used a random number generator [www.randomizer.org/form.htm] to select 6 titles with male

protagonists for the analysis. The twelve titles chosen are listed below in the order read with an indication of the protagonist's gender and their name:

(m) *Whichaway* by Glendon and Kathryn Swarthout (Whichaway)
(f) *Sarah Bishop* by Scott O'Dell (Sarah)
(m) *The Summer I Was Lost* by Phillip Viereck (Paul)
(f) *The Talking Earth* by Jean Craighead George (Billie)
(m) *The Voyage of the Frog* by Gary Paulsen (David)
(f) *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell (Karana)
(m) *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen (Brian)
(f) *When Eagles Fall* by Mary Casanova (Alex)
(m) *Call it Courage* by Armstrong Sperry (Mafatu)
(f) *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George (Julie)
(m) *The Boy Who Spoke Dog* by Clay Morgan (Jack)
(f) *A Girl Named Disaster* by Nancy Farmer (Nhamo)

As I read the novels I looked for passages that could answer the questions outlined in the Purpose above. Each of these passages were then coded using the abbreviations created by Broich [ex. H_1, V_1, etc.]. Memoing also played a big part in the process. As I read through the novels I was able to note developing trends and pick out major differences. Also, each successive novel opened up a new set of ideas that I could then use to examine a preceding novel. For this reason I found it essential to note why I felt certain passages answered specific questions at that specific time. Without those notes it would have been hard to remember how I interpreted each passage on my first pass. I found it very useful to note if any of my interpretations changed as I proceeded through the novels.

Analysis

Male Protagonists

Time at Home Before (H_1)

All of the boys in these titles are in someway distant from their parents. Both of Jack's parents are dead. Both Whichaway's and Mafatu's mothers are dead and their fathers are remote and uncaring. Brian's parents are in the middle of a divorce and while Paul and David both still have loving parents they do not figure much in the story. Also, none of these boys, with the exception of Mafatu, who has some stepsiblings, have any brothers or sisters.

Instead these boys, again with the exception of Mafatu who holds his father in very high esteem, have latched onto other adults to fill the position of role model. Both Brian and Paul look to teachers, both male, from their past. David looks to his Uncle Owen, while Jack and Whichaway look to groups of men; the crew of the *Patty B* in Jack's case and the hands on his father's ranch in Whichaway's.

At the beginnings of their stories Whichaway, Paul, and Mafatu are all unhappy with themselves in relation to their peers, their families, or society and do not know what the future will hold for them. Mafatu is filled with fear and cannot live up to the manly ideal of Polynesian society,

> They worshiped courage, those early Polynesians. The spirit which had urged them across the Pacific in their sailing canoes, before the dawn of recorded history, not knowing where they were going nor caring what their fate might be, still sang its song of danger in their blood. There was only courage. A man who was afraid—what place had he in their midst? And the boy Mafatu—son of

> Tavana Nui, the Great Chief of Hikueru—always had been afraid. So the people drove him forth. Not by violence, but by indifference. (Sperry, p. 2)

Paul is not a very good athlete and dislikes competitive sports, which along with physical strength are held in a very high regard at his school especially for boys,

> "Don't like athletics?" he said. "I never heard of a boy that didn't like athletics." (Viereck, p. 31)

> "Paul," he said sincerely, "the athletic program is a very important side of school life. The youth of our nation need to be tough, not flabby, soft bookworms who haven't good muscular control. It is important to be a good student, but you can't ignore the need for a strong healthy body." (Viereck, p. 32)

Whichaway is just completely unsure of himself and what he wants out of life, to such an extent that he ends up with his telling nickname. He also feels that he has no choices in his life and must follow in his father's footsteps, which could account for his indecisiveness,

> He was a rancher's son, and in the West a rancher's son became a rancher. He followed in his father's footstep…To do anything else was unthinkable. (Swarthout and Swarthout, p. 18)

The other three boys do not have this type of uncertainty. David and Brian are both unhappy, David because of the death of his uncle and Brian because of his parents divorce and the secret knowledge of his mother's affair. They do not enter into their adventures with a need to prove anything to anybody, but only a need to find something to help them keep going through grief. Jack on the other hand is not lacking for anything. He has a new family in the crew of the *Patty B* and is content with his life at the moment his adventure begins.

First Voyage (V_1)

Whichaway and Mafatu set off due to a need for adventure and impulsive actions. Whichaway actively seeks adventure to fill his need,

> He'd been fed on adventure as much as on beef, and it was no wonder if he was disappointed when he looked around at the way the West was now. (Swarthout and Swarthout, p. 10)

He tells one of the ranch hands he is going one way, but his need sends him in the opposite direction to the farthest reaches of the ranch to what he refers to as his "hatingest place" (Swarthout and Swarthout, p. 14). Mafatu sets out in the night in a stolen boat because he can no longer stand the jeering of his peers. He feels a need to prove himself,

> He knew in that instance what he must do: he must prove his courage to himself, and to the others, or he could no longer live in their midst (Sperry, p. 13).

In David's case he also sets out in a very impulsive way. Instead of leaving for a need for adventure he does it with the idea of honoring his Uncle Owen,

> He had told his parents he'd be spending the night on the boat in the marina, then sailing out the next day to leave Owen's ashes in the sea. And when he puts the sails up he simply had in mind that he'd air them, then drop them and tie them off until morning. But all that was different now. There was a fair breeze and no clouds in sight and it seemed to be perfect for a night sail. He had only a few times sailed out at night with his uncle, be he knew that was Owen's favorite time to sail and this was Owen's last trip. (Paulsen, pp. 14-15)

The other boys are more passive in their periods of voyage, on journeys initiated by someone else. Jack is just another crewman on the ship. Brian is a passenger in a plane sent to spend the summer with his father, while Paul is sent off to a camp by parents who know that he is unhappy, but do not know how to help him directly.

First Rescue (Re_1)

Each of the boys ends up in a situation from which he has to eventually take some active part in his own rescue with the exception of Jack. Jack is tied to a bail of wool and tossed into the ocean by the crew during a storm. He eventually washes to the shore of an island, but does nothing to make this happen. Both Paul's and David's actions are somewhat mindless, but action nevertheless. Paul takes off running into the woods in a

panic to save himself from a lightning storm. David races around his boat trying to get ready for a sudden storm, but eventually is knocked unconscious due to his carelessness and barely survives with the few preparations he is able to make.

Mafatu's actions are slightly more active. His boat is severely damaged in a storm and is set adrift. It eventually approaches an island on its own, but he does have to take a very active hand in his survival to make it to shore through the reef. His need for survival outweighs his fear,

> Blindly he struck out, fighting for survival…Somewhere ahead a strip of beach, salt-white in the darkness, lured him onward. His muscles did it of themselves. Only a will to live. (Sperry, p. 32).

Whichaway and Brian take the most active roles in their own survival. Whichaway is blown about by a dust devil and left dangling from a windmill with both his legs broken. He then has to maneuver himself to make it back to the windmill platform instead of falling to his death. Brian, left alone in the plane after the pilot dies of a heart attack, has to decide how to bring the plane down and make it out alive. He takes the most active role in his own rescue and thinks it through carefully even though he is filled with panic,

> Over and over his mind ran the picture of how it would go. The plane running out of gas, flying the plane onto the water, the crash—from pictures he's seen on television. He tried to visualize it. He tried to be ready" (p. 24).

Solitude (S)

The boys all have different ways of handling their solitude but each of them goes through cycles of panic, hope, and coping with being without other people. For each of them also, the time of solitude is used to help them understand something about themselves or to develop some part of their character.

Mafatu, the only one of the boys who is never left in complete solitude because of the company of his dog, also goes through periods of loneliness in terms of his need for other people,

> He was hoping desperately for some sign of human habitation, yet fearing it too; for who knew whether humans might prove friends or enemies? He almost hoped that the island was uninhabited, but if it were—He shivered as he realized his isolation. (Sperry, pp. 41-42)

During his time alone Mafatu begins to appreciate the skills that he has, especially when he realizes that a lot of what he is able to accomplish is the result of the woman's work that he was forced to do at home,

> The boy was beginning to realize that the hours he had spent fashioning utensils were to stand him now in good stead…How he had hated those tasks in Hikueru! He was quick and clever with his hands, and now he was grateful for the skill which was his. (Sperry, p. 64)

He also has many adventurous episodes and starts to feel like he is becoming what his people and his father value and it makes him happy,

> He was all Polynesian now, charged with the ancient fierceness of his race. Victory coursed like fire through his veins. There was nothing he would not have dared! Nothing to be feared! *Aiá*, but life was good!" (Sperry, p. 80).

Similar to Mafatu, during his time alone Paul begins to appreciate and feel pride. He despairs but he realizes that he must depend on himself to survive,

> There was no mother to comfort me, no father to tell me how foolish I had been and to shake his head and bite his lip and worry about me. There was not even a home to go to. There was only me, and I had to depend on myself. There was nothing to do but get up from my beating and somehow fight back to keep myself alive. (Viereck, p. 124)

He comes to realize that there is something in him that is worthy of praise. He just has to be true to himself and to stop trying to be somebody that he is not.

Whichaway has a similar problem. Initially he wants to prove himself to his father,

> What can you leave your father to prove to him that even though you made a fool of yourself by getting your legs broken up on a windmill you tried to the very end to do your best?" (Swarthout and Swarthout, p. 45)

As time passes, though, he continues to want his father to be proud of him, but he also wants to be free to make his own decisions about his future and do something totally opposite to both his father's and society's ideals,

> The truth is, friends, I don't want to be a rancher, even if it breaks my father's heart if he's got a heart. I've got something else in my craw and every young person ought to have the chance to decide what he's cut out for. I'm fifteen now and I have to decide whichaway I'm going to go—be what everybody expect out here or be what I really want. And friends, what I want is outlandish—you bet it is…I want to be what only women are supposed to be in the West, what my mother was. I'll say it right out loud. I want to be a school teacher—a history teacher! (Swarthout and Swarthout, p. 64)

In the end Whichaway hopes that his father will be so proud of him for surviving and getting down from the windmill with two broken legs that he will let him choose his own path.

For David his time of solitude is in part a time of reflection on his uncle's life, but primarily it is a time for him to get some control over himself and learn to be independent. He does feel despair but he takes control and pulls through,

> Well then—if he could think it he could unthink it. If it was all in his mind he could take it all out of his mind. And he did in only a few seconds more, and the feeling passed. He was still hungry and thirsty but it was controlled. (Paulsen, p. 73)

The realization that he must depend solely on himself and set self-pity aside gets him completely focused on his need for survival and making his own way home,

> This is it, he thought, seeing it written—I am alone. And this isn't a temporary situation—or might not be. I'm all I've got. (Paulsen, p. 96).

In Brian's case, he goes from being caught up in his parents' situation and wallowing in self-pity to coming to the realization that he needs to focus on himself and take control of his emotions. After a few episodes of sitting around and crying he finally comes to terms with this,

> He did not know how long it took, but later he looked back on this time of crying the corner of the dark cave and thought of it as when he learned the most important rule of survival, which was that feeling sorry for yourself didn't work. It wasn't just that it was wrong to do, or that it was considered incorrect. It was more than that—it didn't work. (p. 79)

Brian eventually loses all hope of any type of rescue. After he comes to this conclusion he changes inside, in how he thinks, to keep himself alive,

> He was not the same. The plane passing changed him, the disappointment cut him down and made him new. He was not the same and would never be again like he had been. That was one of the true things, the new things. And the other one was that he would not die, he would not let death in again. (p. 119)

After this change, when things go wrong again he is able to move past the fear and continue on because he has gained confidence in himself as an independent person.

Unlike the other boys, Jack is not able to push through his loneliness to find a different sane self. At first he is active and does things to survive, but it begins to be too much,

> Jack's nerves were slowly fraying, too. And it was all because of the slow business of survival. Jack thought that survival was OK, as far as it went. Scavenging was more interesting when his stomach was empty. But when Jack's stomach started to feel half full instead of half empty, the whole staying-alive job began to feel much like a chore. Survival was fine, but Jack needed more." (p. 105)

He finally gets to a point where he loses both human speech and his sense of humanity. He becomes more and more like the dogs that populate the island.

Companionship (C)

For the boys the need for a companion to share in their adventures is not very strong. In many ways their stories are more focused on their own independence. Only three of the boys have a form of living companion. As mentioned above, Mafatu is accompanied for the entirety of his adventure by his dog, Uri. Uri is a source of companionship, but more importantly he is a source of strength for Mafatu. He is the force that continuously spurs Mafatu onward, to overcome his fear and to fight to survive,

> He could never have done it for himself. Fear would have robbed his arm of all strength. He had done it for Uri, his dog. And he felt suddenly humble with gratitude" (Sperry, p. 75).

Jack also has the companionship of dogs. To him the dogs are not a source of strength but they are there for him as providers and protectors. They guide him to tools that will help him survive. He falls so much into their power that in the end he chooses to live as they do instead of keeping his humanity.

For Whichaway his horse is just a means for his deliverance. He also has the memories of his mother to help him through, but without his horse Whichaway would have been unable to get himself down from the windmill. His memories keep him sane and keep him going, but his actual companion he uses as a tool to rescue himself.

The other three boys do not have living companions. Brian, David, and Paul all have memories of role models and family to help them. Brian also has his hatchet and David has the *Frog*, a quasi-embodiment of his uncle's spirit. But ultimately these three boys faced their adventures completely alone.

Nature (N)

Each of the boys has a different take on Nature. For all of them there is the constant of Nature as a provider and a source of food. Mafatu also sees Nature as a proving ground. It is an unforgiving and adversarial force that must be conquered,

> This world of the sea was ruled by nature's harsh law of survival." (Sperry, p. 19)
>
> This sea—no more to be feared than earth or air: only another element for man to conquer. (Sperry, p. 94)

For Paul, Nature is also a proving ground, but not necessarily a force that is antagonistic to him,

> I thought with some fear that if I were now engaged in a contest with the rest of the creatures here for survival of the fittest, the raccoons who stole my food had proved themselves more fit than I. (Viereck, pp. 110-111)
>
> This wilderness is neither my friend nor my enemy. It is simply here, and it is up to me to make either good or bad use of it.' And I felt a sort of rush of pride as I realized that so far I was proving equal to the challenge of survival. (p. 131)

Only through proving himself by surviving in Nature is he able to prove to himself that his own interests are important.

Nature is the ultimate teacher for both Brian and David. Both of them are at first afraid of Nature, but they both begin to learn about what is going on around them and lose their fear. When Brian starts to pay attention to the things that Nature is trying to teach him about survival it is as if a new world opens up to him,

> It was like turning on a television. Suddenly he could see things he never saw before. (Paulsen, p. 137)

For David the need for understanding and wanting to understand what is happening around him sets him at ease,

> Knowledge, he thought…is everything. As Owen had said. Owen who had wanted to know all there was.

> Knowledge was for times like this, David thought, rolling with the shark attacks. To have knowledge makes anything endurable. It's everything. (Paulsen, p. 65)

Both of these boys also see Nature as something beautiful and better than civilization as well. David even looks on Nature as something worthy of worship,

> Every time they cleared the harbor, or every time that David was with him, Owen had become silent, looking out at the sea. It was a silence of thought, almost of reverence, a kind of worship, and David now did the same, felt the same. (Paulsen, p. 19)

Whichaway also feels a type of reverence for Nature learned from his mother. His feelings about Nature even become paramount to his own survival. Before his adventure even really begins he shoots a baby rabbit and is filled remorse and calls himself a murderer. Later while he is trapped he steals eggs out of a nest for food, but when the bird parents protest he returns the eggs to the nest. He chooses their survival over his own.

For the story of Jack, ideas about Nature are not as concrete. Jack's situation on the island has put him in a limbo between Nature and civilization. He is able to live because he finds the remains of a homestead and gardens in a meadow, and has the companionship and protection of a group of domesticated dogs. On the other hand he is trapped in the meadow by a feral pack of dogs that have returned to Nature and forgotten all vestiges of their domestication. But even though civilized things surround him, he begins to go the way of the feral dogs and lose aspects of his humanity.

Second Rescue (Re_2)

The only one of the boys who knows from the start that he has to rescue himself is Mafatu. He knows that no one is going to come looking for him and that it is his responsibility to get both himself and Uri back to his home island. Paul, David, and

Whichaway also eventually come to this same conclusion. Paul is able to make it out of the woods alone and sees some of the people sent out to find him before they even see him. David is able to set the *Frog* to rights and make it back to shore. Whichaway with the aid of his horse is able to get down off the windmill.

Both Brian and Jack, who have lost hope of every being found, inadvertently bring about their rescues. Brian, while looking for supplies in the wrecked airplane, comes across an emergency transmitter. He fiddles with it for a bit and decides that it is broken, and is completely dumb-founded when a plane lands in the lake in front of him. Jack had set up a pile of logs to use as a signal fire if he ever sighted a ship. At the point when he loses all sense of himself as a person he sets the pile of logs on fire. It sends a signal to the ship holding his remaining crewmates that just so happens to be off the island.

Second Voyage (V_2)

Mafatu is spurred into starting his voyage home by the approach of cannibals. He is forced to use all of his newfound skill at sea to leave them behind, once again proving his mastery. David after making it back to shore alone refuses to be taken on board another vessel which would mean he would have to abandon the *Frog*. He only accepts provisions and asks them to let his parents know where he is. He then continues his journey home alone, a trip that could take another couple of weeks. Paul when he comes across searchers refuses to be carried out of the wilderness on a stretcher. Neither is about to give up the his independence.

Whichaway acts in a similar fashion. When his father and the ranch hands show up, he chooses to ride his horse home even though his legs are broken. This need for independence is reinforced by his father's disregard of what he has just gone through,

> He might not make the fifteen miles to the ranch, but even if he fell off he wouldn't holler. Not even for his father. Ever again. He was man enough now to cut his own mustard. (Swarthout and Swarthout, p. 101)

For Jack and Brian the return voyage is very different. In Jack's situation, if you consider his second voyage the short trip back to the *Patty B*, it is in no way triumphant. He actually keeps trying to jump back into the water and swim back to the island. There is no mention in the story of Brian's return to civilization from the wilderness. One moment he is in the wilderness and the next he out. This could be indicative of the fact that the most important voyage went on in his head rather than to and from the wilderness.

Time at Home After (H_2)

All of the boys come away from their adventures with something they did not start with. They each go through physical changes, but the most important changes are the mental ones. In Mafatu's case he returns to his people triumphant and his greatest wish, to have his father be proud of him, is fulfilled,

> The Great Chief's face was transformed with joy. This brave figure, so thin and straight, with the fine necklace and the flashing spear and courage blazing from his eyes—his son? The man could only stand and stare, as if he could not believe his senses.
>
> "Here is my son come home from the sea. Mafatu, Stout Heart. A brave name for a brave boy!" (Sperry, p. 115)

The same is true for Paul. He returns to civilization with a sense of his own worth and respect for himself,

> And then when I was in the Pemigewasset Wilderness, while I suppose I have to say I was lost, it really was more that the rest of the world was lost and I was alone with myself. And I found when it came to depending on myself I wasn't so bad after all. I knew how to do the things I had to do to stay alive, and I had the strength to do them." (p. 158)

He also learns from a park ranger that in some respects he is better than other men,

> Some men lose all confidence in themselves as soon as they realize that they are lost. They depend on getting constant reassurance from people around them, and as soon as they are really alone, they have no resources. (Viereck, p. 141)

The only other boy with something to prove was Whichaway. When he realizes that his father will not show him any form of approval, affection, or pride at what his son accomplished, Whichaway knows that he now has the strength to be his own type of man in anyway that he sees fit.

Brian returns to civilization with the new sense of awareness that he learned in the wilderness. He also becomes more thoughtful. Also, his decision to not tell his father about his mother's affair indicates that he has also become a more insular person, apart from everyone else. In David's case we never see his actual return home, just his choice to reach it under his own power. This could be considered his choice to make the boat if not his physical home, his spiritual home in the same way his uncle had before him.

Jack again stands out as different from the other boys. He is returned to the crew that took him in as family on the ship, but what he longs for is to be back on the island with the dogs that he chose to be his family. Coming back to his human self is not easy for him,

> He knew he was a boy. He knew that, but it was a terrible strain. His newly learned dog senses were calling him back. (Morgan, p. 165)

He vows to return to the dogs, but whether this is a fleeting desire or a true need is not known.

Female Protagonists

Time at Home Before (H_1)

All of the female protagonists are distant from at least one or both of their parents. At the beginning of their stories Nhamo's, Sarah's, Julie's, and Karana's mothers are all dead. Sarah, Julie and Karana were all raised by their fathers for a time, although before the novel begins Julie's father has disappeared and she lives with one of her aunts. Nhamo was raised by maternal relatives after her mother's death and her father's disappearance. Alex's parents, though they love and care about her, are separated and Billie's parents do not live together. Of the six of them only Julie and Nhamo never had siblings, although Nhamo was raised among many cousins.

Neither Karana nor Sarah seem to have concrete role models. Both look up to their fathers, but their attitudes towards their fathers seem like the stereotypical father/daughter relationship. Julie on the other hand looks to her father as a source of inspiration and as a strong role model. Billie also looks to her father as a role model in terms of his interest in science, but she looks more to her mother as a role model,

> Whispering Wind would think of something; for, like Billie, she was very practical. She had to be. She was the head of the Wind Clan and dealt with many problems that the medicine man the councilmen did not: settling arguments, encouraging leadership and giving self-confidence. (George, p. 7)

Nhamo also has a strong female role model. Instead of her mother it is her maternal grandmother who is very independent and different from other women in their society,

> Grandmother had always been independent. She smoked a pipe. She sometimes sat in the men's dare. She maintained far more control of her wealth and affairs than any woman Nhamo knew. That was Grandmother, and no one expected her to behave any differently. (Farmer, p. 55).

Nhamo's grandmother is also the only one of her relatives that really ever shows her any kind of affection.

Of all of the girls Alex has the most complex relationship in terms of a role model because of issues surrounding the death of her brother and her parent's separation. Her confusion and hurt leads her to reckless behavior and she almost dies of alcohol poisoning. Alex does hold her father in very high esteem, but she also rejects much of his advice due to her anger and hurt,

> Her voice was rude, but she couldn't seem to talk with her father anymore without a bite in her tone. (Casanova, p. 8)

Her confusion leads her to try to reject him as a role model but she ultimately looks to him and his wisdom when she gets into trouble later in the story.

With the exception of Karana, who has a strong since of responsibility and duty when it came to her people, all of the girls are either unhappy or in some way conflicted with their place in society. Julie ends up getting married at a very young age because of an arranged marriage, but her main problems with society are the conflict between her Eskimo heritage and Americanization. The same is also true of Billie in terms of her Seminole heritage and Americanization. Sarah is caught between the rebels whom her brother idolizes and the royalists whom her father follows during the Revolutionary War with the result that she chooses her own path instead of taking a side.

Nhamo just does not fit in with her people at all and they do not see anything of value in her. To her people a woman's value is based entirely upon her ability to bring her family wealth with her marriage and to produce male offspring which requires beauty, good behavior, and duty. Nhamo, indoctrinated with these ideas, tries to live up

to them, but fails. There is something in her that wants more, but she does not know what it is,

> Nhamo's spirit had to be kept very busy to keep her from losing her temper.
>
> The other girls in the village never felt restless. Nhamo was like a pot of boiling water. "I want … I want …," she whispered to herself, but she didn't know what she wanted and so she had no idea how to find it. (Farmer, p. 2)

First Voyage (V_1)

Alex sets out on her voyage with the impulsive hope of proving herself worthy of her father's affection,

> She could do this. Maybe her dad thought she had her head in the clouds, but she'd prove him wrong. How hard could it be to paddle a canoe or climb a tree? Part of her didn't even know why helping the eaglets had suddenly become so important, so deep-down urgent. But it had. She knew—more clearly than she'd known anything in a long, long time—she had to try. (Casanova, p. 17)

Billie is sent off on her voyage as a form of punishment due to the disrespect that she shows towards Seminole beliefs. While she does not initiate the voyage at the onset, when it gets to be the time for her to leave she does so in anger.

Sarah takes off for the wilderness spurred by fear of the British who want to put her on trial for a crime she did not commit. Despite her fear though she is also filled with anger at the world,

> I feared Captain Cunningham. Yet fear was only a small part of everything. It was anger that I felt most. Anger at the war that had caused Chad's death and my father's. Anger at the rebels and the King's men alike. And at all the needless killings. (O'Dell, p. 81)

A mixture of fear and anger also start Julie and Nhamo on their voyages. Julie, with dreams of living with her pen pal in San Francisco, runs to escape potential rape at the hands of her child-husband and Nhamo runs to find her father's family, at the insistence

of her grandmother, to escape an arranged marriage with an old man. Nhamo even sees the voyage as a source of adventure,

> In spite of her fear, Nhamo felt a little thrill of excitement. She was really doing it! She was sailing away from Zororo and his jealous wives." (p. 87)

Karana's case is entirely different. She does not leave her home. She in fact chooses to remain on the island because of the love she feels for her brother instead of taking the voyage to the mainland with the rest of her people. Nevertheless she does take a direct action in the path that her life will take.

First Rescue (Re_1)

Both Alex and Billie are forced to take an active hand in rescuing themselves from disaster. Alex has to keep afloat during a storm in the lake. Alex admits to herself that she does need help, but perseveres even though she feels helpless. She eventually washes up on the shore of an island. When she finally realizes that she is in danger, Billie is forced to find shelter because of an approaching forest fire. Only through a stroke of luck is she able to find a sinkhole to shelter her.

For the other girls the initial rescue, instead of a rescue from a disaster like Alex or Billie, is a rescue more from their society and their current mind-sets. This rescue is in many ways connected to the choices they made to start their voyages. Julie and Nhamo, in choosing to run away, rescue themselves from societal situations that could cause them harm.

Karana's rescue on the other hand is when she decides to keep going after wild dogs kill her brother. She rescues herself mentally by choosing the path of revenge,

> All night I sat there with the body of my brother and did not sleep. I vowed that some day I would go back and kill the wild dogs in the cave. I would kill all of

> them. I thought of how I would do it, but mostly I thought of Ramo, my brother. (O'Dell, p. 55)

Sarah just needs to rescue herself from the rest of the world. She chooses the wilderness over civilization in hopes of healing herself after so much running,

> At this moment, as I stood talking to the Black girl, I made my mind up. I was sick and confused and weary of fleeing. But I was afraid to stay in the village because of British soldiers. And I really didn't want to stay here, whether they came looking for me or not. I wanted to be by myself. I would go into the land we were talking about, the wilderness land that lay between the village and the big river. I had fled far enough. (O'Dell, p. 108)

Solitude (S)

With the exception of Nhamo, the time in solitude for the girls is relatively brief when you look at their entire stories. Nhamo is actually the one that is the hardest hit during her time of solitude, even though most of her prior experiences with companionship had been unpleasant. She cannot understand why she has this need for other people,

> Still, when darkness fell, so did her spirit. '*Why* do I need people?' She wondered as she huddled in the damp boat. 'I'm full of food and comfortable—well, fairly comfortable. I'm safe—well, fairly safe. Soon I'll go on to Zimbabwe. But right now I wish I could see Aunt Chipo. I don't care if she beats me. I even want to see Zororo, and he's a pig! I don't understand it. (Farmer, pp. 101-102)

She is always mindful of her need to get through the pain and continue with her life,

> When the lonely-sickness came over her, she plunged anew into the blue-green waves. Danger kept her from despair. Farther and farther out she swam…As long as she kept busy, she didn't think. But at night, in the middle of the night, she woke up without any defenses and cried hopelessly until dawn showed in the sky." (Farmer, p. 119)

Alex, Julie, and Karana also have to deal with living without human companionship and each goes through the cycles of self-pity, grief and coping. Like Nhamo, Alex is hit pretty hard with the fact that she has no human companionship,

> She wanted to cry. Wanted to just give herself over to tears and sobbing. Just lie on the dock and give up completely. (p. 89)

Despite her initial grief she keeps on going and suppresses it in hopes of making her father proud,

> Her father would be proud of her. She hadn't completely given herself over to emotion. (Casanova, p. 91).

She thinks back on characters from literature who have had similar experiences to help her as well. She is only able to come up with two possible characters that she can identify with as a girl,

> She tried to think in terms of heroines, girls who had survived in the wild. She thought of the girl in *Julie of the Wolves* and the one in *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. Other than those—her mind drew a blank. (Casanova, p. 96)

In the end her time without human companionship helps her to understand her self more fully,

> Never had she felt so free, so much herself. She was completely alone. Scared, yes. Worried, yes. But something else was seeping into the cracks she would have once called loneliness. She should be lonely, but she wasn't. It was if she was seeing herself, truly being with herself for the first time. (Casanova, p. 113)

In her time alone Billie is also initially filled with self-pity, but as she begins to accept her heritage she finds comfort in it,

> That night she lay awake for a long time thinking of her ancestors and the daily live they lived. They had fire and tools and fish and they made beautiful pots. The ghosts of the distant past seemed to snuggle closely around her, and she felt safe. (George, pp. 44-45)

She discovers a new yearning to learn about Seminole beliefs and put aside Americanized ideas. This desire outweighs her need for other people,

> "I don't want to be found now," she said. "I've gone too far and am too close to the answer I seek." (George, p. 112)

Julie, also caught between two cultures, looks to find a balance between her two sides to cope with her time without human companionship,

> She spoke half in Eskimo and half in English, as if the instincts of her father and the science of the *gussaks*, the white-faced, might evoke some magical combination that would help her get her message through to the wolf. (George, pp. 8-9)

Julie eventually is able to find peace in the wilderness without people and accept her solitary situation, but only until other people come to her.

Karana like the other girls is filled with self-pity at her solitary state and loses hope,

> The thought of being alone on the island while so many suns rose from the sea and went slowly back into the sea filled my heart with loneliness. I had not felt so lonely before because I was sure that the ship would return as Matasaip had said it would. Now my hopes were dead. Now I was really alone. I could not eat much, nor could I sleep without dreaming terrible dreams." (O'Dell, pp. 66-67)

Her grief drives her to make an escape attempt in a canoe, but she eventually has to turn back because it leaks too much. When she makes it back to the island she realizes that she does want to live and that she can live without human companionship,

> Everything that I saw filled me with happiness…
>
> I was surprised I felt this way, for it was only a short time ago that I had stood on this same rock and felt that I could not bear to live here another day. (O'Dell, pp. 76-77)

Sarah is the only one of the girls that fully accepts and enjoys her solitude. Her time living alone without companionship makes her happy. A Native American family stays near her cave for a time and when they leave she realizes that she does not mind,

> I watched the family go down the slope. They had a birch canoe beached on the lake. As they moved away, they waved and I waved back. I liked them. They were friendly people. But for some reason I was not sorry to see them go.
> It was mostly that I had grown comfortable in my new life. (O'Dell, p. 138)

For Sarah solitude is more fulfilling for her than living with other people,

> And not only had I become comfortable, now I found myself looking forward to each day." (O'Dell, p. 139)

Companionship (C) and Nature (N)

For all of the girls their time of companionship and their interactions with Nature are intimately tied together. Each of the girls views Nature with some amount of trepidation, Nhamo to the greatest extent since her mother was killed by a leopard, but they move through this fear to the realization that Nature is also a provider.

The link between Nature and their time of companionship for each of the girls is defined by the fact that each of them takes animal companions. Julie and Billie both see their animal friends as extended families. After Julie is accepted by the wolf pack she sings this song of praise to Amaroq the pack leader,

> *Amaroq, wolf, my friend,*
> *You are my adopted father.*
> *My feet shall run because of you.*
> *My heart shall beat because of you.*
> *And I shall love because of you.* (George, p. 60)

Julie's wolves protect her, provide for her, and treat her as one of the pack. Julie eventually also takes on a more protective and mothering role to the wolves they are attacked by gunmen in an airplane. She also adopts a bird that would not be able to live through the winter without her care. Billie after discovering both a baby otter [Petang] and a baby panther remarks,

> "Well," she said happily, "I am now the mother to an otter and a panther. The otter is a father to the panther and the panther is a son to the otter and me." "Even I believe only a medicine bundle could conjure up this family." She hugged the big kitten and kissed Petang. "But all livings things are family, and one can not live without the other." (George, p. 91)

In a similar fashion Karana, initially fearing the wild dogs, kills and injures a number them. Later as she feels remorse, she takes in one them and nurses him back to health. Karana later adopts other animals and even goes so far as to stop killing entirely, at least birds and mammals. She gets to a point where she sees them as creatures just like herself,

> Ulape would have laughed at me, and the others would have laughed, too—my father most of all. Yes this is the way I felt about the animals who had become my friends and those who were not, but in time could be. If Ulape and my father had come back and laughed, and all the others had come back and laughed, still I would have felt the same way, for animals and birds are like people, too, though they do not talk the same or do the same things. Without them the earth would be an unhappy place. (O'Dell, p. 161)

Sarah and Alex also take protective roles with respect to their animal companions. Sarah befriends and protects a bat, a type of animal that once fill her with fear. She also takes in an injured pack rat and nurses it back to health. Alex is compelled to take responsibility for the injured eaglet she frightens from its nest. For Alex this choice to have an animal companion is a step toward her becoming responsible for her own actions,

> At least he had managed to survive so far. No thanks to her. Now she had to make sure he stayed alive. (Casanova, p. 82)

Nhamo's relationship with her animal companions is defined in a very different from the other girls. For the majority of her story she is in competition with Nature, both as a natural force and with respect to the animals. At one point she lives for a time near a troop of baboons. As she watches them she begins to see human qualities in them. The baboons come to accept her and become a source comfort,

> Nhamo's emotions underwent a rapid change. She was relieved of course, and then please that the tiny creature had trusted her. And then—and then—she began to shiver. From some unknown depth, sobs rolled out of her. Tag jumped back,

> his mouth open in alarm. Nhamo wept until she thought she was wrung dry. All those nights she lay on the platform hugging he grain bag came back to her. What she wanted, what she desperately needed, was *touch*. Now she understood the hours the baboons spend combing one another's fur. (Farmer, p. 192)

Nhamo also has companions of a different type. In the society that she grew up in there is a strong belief in spirits (including Nature spirits), ghosts and other supernatural beings. Nhamo frequently communes with these beings. They are both a source of comfort for her and a source of advice. Whether or not these beings are actually real in terms of the story or just simply a way for Nhamo to cope with living alone is not entirely clear. Either way, whether they are real or figments of her own helpful subconscious, she does realize that they are not enough to keep her going,

> She could have lived there forever. She could have built her own hut to shelter from the rain and devised fishing lines to satisfy her need for meat. But the one thing the island could never provide was company. Spirits were thin fare, compared to people. They didn't breath comfortingly in the middle of the night, and they couldn't hold her in their arms… (Farmer, pp. 138-139)

Like Nhamo, Sarah also has another type of companion. Soon after she first runs from the British she buys a musket. The man who sells it to her even goes so far as to call it a companion and she agrees with him,

> "Of course, a girl like you shouldn't be traveling at all, but since you are, here's a good companion to take along." (O'Dell, p. 92)

> "That was the way I looked at the musket now – as a companion." (O'Dell, p. 93)

After this she keeps the musket by her side at all times and it enables her to both protect and provide for herself.

Second Rescue (Re_2)

Only two of the girls are rescued in a conventional sense. Karana, after totally giving up on ever seeing any form of rescue, is picked up by a group of white men. She

does have to take the step of approaching them to end her time alone, but she does nothing to bring them to her island. Alex, trapped and knowing that time is running out for the injured eagle, sets a signal fire that brings her rescuers to her.

Nhamo and Billie both provide their own means of rescue. Nhamo must figure out how to repair her boat and make her way to Zimbabwe alone. Billie must make a boat and figure out how to make it back to her people. Sarah and Julie both come to the realization that they do not need civilization and that they can live comfortably on their own. At this point in their stories they both have the option of choosing the wilderness and living in solitude over civilization.

Second Voyage (V_2)

Alex, Billie, and Nhamo are the only girls that have a true voyage out of the wilderness. Alex's voyage is a time of contemplation in which she comes to understand her father and what happened to her parents after her brother died,

> From what she was learning about life, it was pretty clear that no one could hold back pain and tragedy forever. All anyone could do in the circumstances that life handed you. And often, despite your best intentions, you made a lot of mistakes along the way. (p. 139)

Billie, with her newfound respect for her Seminole heritage and a need to turn away from Americanization, chooses to take another longer path home,

> She could not go home the way she had come, for white men were everywhere…She would paddle and pole and even sail is she had to until she found he own people. (George, p. 71)

Nhamo also avoids other people on her way to Zimbabwe. Those she does encounter are either wary or afraid of her. At one point frightened people set dogs on her. She is forced to kill one of the dogs in self-defense and in doing so briefly looses her sanity or in terms of the book becomes possessed by an evil spirit. Despite this setback she is still

able to make it out of the wilderness under her own power and reach, if not her actual home, her spiritual home.

The second voyage of Julie, similar to some of the initial rescues (R_1) above, is more symbolic then actual. Julie makes the decision to stay in the wilderness for the time being, but then changes her mind as civilization begins to encroach upon her Eskimo wilderness. First men fly over and shoot her wolves and then she learns that her father is still alive and living nearby. She is then full of a hope for a new beginning with the man that she has so admired for his dedication to Eskimo ways all of her life. She does have to travel to get to him, but her choice is just as much a voyage.

As for Karana, her actual voyage, the one back to the mainland is never described. The only indication of what her voyage might have been like is the actions of the men that she presents herself to on the island. She goes to them dressed in all of her finery and the first thing they do is make her a set of cloths that she finds uncomfortable, but that they consider appropriate.

Time at Home After (H_2)

While they might not necessarily be conventional homes, both Nhamo and Sarah make choices about what their true homes are. Nhamo, even though she must spend time with her Zimbabwean relatives, has gained enough self-awareness to mentally find her home with the people in the research facility where she ends her voyage. There she finds the affection and appreciation that she always craved,

> Nhamo was happier than she could ever remember. She was accepted. She was safe. And everyone went out of his or her way to make her feel wanted." (Farmer, p. 266)

Sarah on the other hand chooses to stay in the wilderness alone. Her independence has come to mean too much to her, although she does remain open to one day rejoining civilization.

As for Alex, she returns to her father with the shame of having injured an eaglet but also with proof of her newfound responsibility and a better understanding of her family. Her father acknowledges his pride in her and in the end she gets what she set out looking for. Billie also finds what she was searching for, a deeper understanding of Seminole heritage and the message of the animals,

> And, at last, she understood Charlie Wind. He had sent her on a mission, not a punishment. Spider lilies were lightening bolts and lightening bolts were spider lilies. Albert Einstein had said the same thing in physics, $E=mc^2$, but that had been destructive. So it must be said in spider lilies."
> "And oh, that will be beautiful, Charlie Wind. The Earth will not blow up and die." (George, p. 151)

While there is no physical homecoming or opportunity for the reader to experience what her life is like after her time in the wilderness, there is this glimpse of her understanding.

Neither Julie nor Karana have an actual homecoming. Karana's story just ends. This could be in part because she never will have a homecoming since she is actually leaving her home to go an alien place. Also, as it is a novel based on an historical occurrence, it is possible that the author felt constrained in terms of where he could go with the story after emphasizing Karana's independence and survival skills for such a large part of the novel.

Julie when she discovers that her father has lost many of his Eskimo ways briefly returns to the wilderness, her chosen home. When her bird dies, she decides that this home has also been taken from her. She sings a song of grieving to the spirit of Amaroq, not in Eskimo, but entirely in English, which ends with the phrase, "…the hour of the

wolf and the Eskimo is over." (George, p. 170). After this statement she goes back to her father, a man she no longer understands.

Conclusions

There are both similarities and differences between the experiences of the male and female protagonists. The similarities were expected since all these novels do come from the same genre and therefore must have something in common. While the differences in the plot divisions in these novels can not be divided completely along gender lines, there are trends that do follow them.

The trend for the boys is that they begin their stories unhappy with their lives, take some type of voyage where they get into physical danger caused by some type of disaster, rescue themselves from the danger, learn to cope with their solitude, live without companionship, use Nature, pursue rescue and the voyage home, and return home happier than they left. The trend for the girls is that they begin their stories unhappy with their lives, run away from something in their lives, rescue themselves from societal problems, learn to cope with their solitude, find companionship, look to Nature as a substitute for family, take an active role in their rescues and voyages home, and return home happier than they left.

While both groups are generally unhappy with their lives at the beginning of their stories, there is one difference in the protagonists' backgrounds that does show division along gender lines. Of all the girls, Alex is the only one who does not come from either a culture or a time period when people were taught about living off the land. Karana, Julie, Billie, and Nhamo all grew up in native societies where living off the land was part of their way of life. Sarah, growing up during the American Revolution, was also raised in

a time where people had to live much closer to the land. Of the boys, only Mafatu grew up in a native culture and learned to live off the land. Paul, Brian, David, Whichaway and Jack were never taught to live off the land.

There are two ways of looking at this. One is that boys are seen as more impulsive and adventure seeking, so they end up in situations that they are not as well prepared for by their backgrounds, while the girls only set out if they know they have the knowledge required to take care of themselves. The other is the idea that girls without a background in living off the land do not have what it takes to provide for themselves in survival situations while the boys do, so authors do not put girls in these types of situations.

This idea that girls must have cultural knowledge of survival skills while boys do not indicates a societal belief that any independence that girls achieve must all be traced back to skills learned from others instead of ability generated from within. The girls are just the passive vessels of cultural knowledge while the boys are expected to have the ability to generate these skills without the help of others. This relegates girls to a position in which they are almost completely dependent on others while boys are given the impression that they should be able to take care of themselves without any outside help.

Also of note, is the fact that of all the protagonists only two of the girls have initial female role models, and Billie's mother and Nhamo's grandmother are not stereotypical women. All of the other protagonists, male and female, begin their stories with male role models. It is very interesting to see the girls taking male role models just like their male counterparts. This could be indicative of the fact that in these types of situations girls need role models that are stereotypically independent to survive instead of

role models that are stereotypically dependent. It is also interesting to note that Whichaway, the only character of either gender to choose another role model, chooses a female role model, which in the end actually reinforces his independence from his father. It is almost as if his stereotypically masculine need to rebel against father is pushed to such an extreme that he must turn to a stereotypically feminine role to achieve autonomy.

In terms of their voyages and rescues, the girls whose experiences most closely mirror that of the boys are Alex and Billie, the only two girls with masculine names. Both of these characters are also very interested in proving themselves to society in a similar fashion to many of the boys. It is possible that authors chose to give the girls masculine names to emphasize how independent and strong they are rather than just choosing a traditional feminine name. It is also possible that the authors chose these names to reinforce the idea that stereotypical femininity is not an asset in the wilderness. It is almost as if society places the wilderness within the realm of the masculine and girls with feminine qualities are being told that they cannot survive there.

The relationships that the protagonists have with their companions and Nature are the most distinct division between the genders. Only three of the boys have living companions. Mafatu and Jack both have dogs, although their relationships are completely different. Mafatu is in the role of master and protector, while Jack is actually mastered by his dogs. Whichaway has his horse, but ultimately he just uses it as a tool to free himself. All of the girls on the other hand have companions. This emphasizes the stereotypical ideas that girls are social creatures and cannot survive alone while boys are more independent and do not need social interaction to survive.

All of the protagonists see Nature at some point in their stories as both a provider and a source of fear. Also, the boys all end up using Nature as some sort of tool. The type of tool varies. For some Nature is a source of knowledge. For others it is a proving ground. Two of the girls, Alex and Billie, also see Nature as a proving ground, but for the girls, Nature's main role in their lives is as a companion. All the girls actually use animals as family substitutes and with the exception of Nhamo develop maternal protective relationships with their animal companions and Nature as a whole.

The need for the authors to show the girls in maternal protective roles is in line with the gender stereotypes, as is the boys' use of Nature and eschewing companionship for independence. Another interesting point about companionship is the role that Brian's hatchet, David's boat, and Sarah's musket play for these characters. All are tools that could be considered companions of a sort to the protagonist. Unlike the boys though, Sarah's musket is also a symbol of her aggression towards the rest of society since muskets are stereotypically not considered tools for women.

The reader is not given a chance to see David, Whichaway, Julie, and Karana in their homes and the impact that their time in solitude had on their future lives. For the rest we do. Apart from Jack, who loses his humanity, they all find something that they had been missing and grow more independent, although Sarah is the only one of the protagonists that chooses to ultimately remain alone in the wilderness. Julie, who had initially chosen to remain independent, and Karana both give up their independence to return to civilization.

Julie, Karana and Jack all have to give something up in the end, although the authors do make it clear in the cases of Julie and Karana that the decision is their own.

Jack on the other hand has to be forcibly removed from his island. He is not given the chance to follow through with his not so sane choice. Also when thinking about choice, it is interesting to examine the differences between Scott O'Dell's two female protagonists. Karana, who is based on an historical figure, gives up her independence and Sarah completely embraces hers. Sarah's fictionalized display of triumphant female independence is set in sharp contrast to the true events of Karana's life, and is possibly indicative of Scott O'Dell's outlook on female independence.

In this same vein it is important to note that many of the similarities within genders in these stories can be accounted for by the fact that there are duplicate authors. Five authors (with the addition of one co-author) wrote the six novels with male protagonists and four authors wrote the six novels with female protagonists. Of the five authors for the male protagonists only one, the co-author of *Whichaway*, is female and interestingly enough Whichaway is the only male protagonist that ends up accepting a female role model. Scott O'Dell was the lone male author for the female protagonists and as discussed above his protagonists ended their stories in very different ways.

While there are these issues with duplicate authors it is still apparent that many of the actions that occur in the plot divisions are the result of the gender of the protagonist. It is also evident that the girls in these novels display qualities useful in the wilderness that are more frequently associated with the male gender role in addition to their qualities that are associated with the female gender role. This seems to reflect the idea that females are given more latitude in terms of gender role fluidity, and ultimately more choices about what to do with their lives in our current society.

The differences found in the story structure between the two genders can definitely be associated with gender roles. For the most part they each segregate into their socially acceptable gender roles. Within the plot divisions many of the boys are aggressive, adventure seeking and individualistic while the girls deal more with social problems, seek companionship, and develop maternal feelings. For the girls there is still the dichotomy between the dual female and male gender role traits that many of them exhibit. While society is able to accept girls who exhibit male gender roles traits more readily than boys who exhibit female gender roles traits, the scarcity of Robinsonades written with female protagonists indicates that society has still not come to terms with portrayals of nonstereotypical girls.

Suggestions for Further Research

There are a number of ways that Robinsonades could be utilized for further research. By concentrating on the plot divisions for this study, many gender related issues could not be discussed or explored. This includes looking at something as small as how the protagonists felt about crying to how they viewed the division of labor. Also, this paper did not look into how the time frame in which the books were written could have affected the portrayal of gender roles.

It could also prove interesting to look at adolescent development as a whole in Robinsonades instead of just focusing on gender differences. Robinsonades including peer groups (all male, all female, or mixed) or family groups could be compared to those with individual protagonists to determine whether or not authors expect different things out of their characters in these different situations.

Also there is an evident lack of Robinsonades written with female protagonists. This brings up a lot of questions. Are Robinsonades with female protagonists rarely written because girls are not interested in reading them or is this just the perception of publishers and authors? Does it matter to girls or boys whether or not the books they read have protagonists of the same gender? Do girls who enjoy Robinsonades want more stories with female protagonists or does the gender of the protagonist in these situations not matter to them?

Considering how little research has been done on Robinsonades in comparison to how many have been written since *Robinson Crusoe* was first published it is clear that

there is definitely room for more. Robinsonades offer future researchers the opportunity to examine a genre that has existed for almost 300 years and trace how it has developed over time and how it has remained relevant.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Casanova, M. (2002). *When eagles fall.* New York: Hyperion Paperbacks for Children.

Defoe, D. (2003). *Robinson Crusoe.* (L.J. Swingle, Introduction). New York: Barnes & Nobles Classics. (Original work published in 1719)

George, J. (1972). *Julie of the wolves.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

George, J. (1983). *The talking earth.* New York: HarperTrophy.

Farmer, N. (1996). *A girl named Disaster.* New York: Puffin Books.

Morgan, C. (2003). *The boy who spoke dog.* New York: Puffin Books.

O'Dell, S. (1960). *Island of the blue dolphins.* New York: Dell Publishing Co.

O'Dell, S (1980). *Sarah Bishop.* New York: Scholastic Inc.

Paulsen, G. (1999). *Hatchet.* Rev. ed. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks. (Original work published in 1987)

Paulsen, G. (1989). *The Voyage of the Frog.* New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers.

Sperry, A. (1971). *Call it courage.* 1st Collier Books ed. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company. (Original work published in 1940)

Swarthout, G. and K. Swarthout. (1992). *Whichaway.* 1st Borzoi Sprinter ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. (Original work published in 1966)

Viereck, P. (1965). *The summer I was lost.* New York: The John Day Company.

Works Cited

Babbie, E. (2004). *The practice of social research*. 10th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Basow, S. (1986). *Gender stereotypes: traditions and alternatives.* 2nd ed. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Broich, U. (1975). *Gattungen des moderne englischen Romans*. Wiesbaden: Athenaion.

Chafetz, J. (1978). *Masculine feminine or human?* 2nd ed. Itasca, Ill: F. E. Peacock Publishers.

Du Mont, M. J. (1993). Images of women in young adult science fiction and fantasy, 1970, 1980, and 1990: a comparative content analysis. *Voice of Youth Advocates*, *16*, 11-15.

Kimmel, M. (2000). *The gendered society*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Maher, S. N. (1988). Recasting Crusoe: Frederick Marryat, R.M. Ballantyne and the Nineteenth-Century Robinsonade. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, *13*(4), 169-175.

Meuchel, A. (1999). *Traits and stereotypes of male protagonists in high fantasy novels as compared by gender of the author: a content analysis.* (M.S.L.S. master's paper, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

Redden, G., & Macdonald, L. (2005). Still surviving desert islands: *The Beach*, imperialism, and cultural value. *Queen: a journal of rhetoric and power*, 2.1. Retrieved Mar 13, 2006, from http://ars-rhetorica.net/Queen/Volume21/Articles/ReddenMacdonald.htm.

Rousseau, J. (1979). *Emile: or, On education* (Allan Bloom, Trans.). New York: Basic Books, Inc. (Original work published in 1762)

Siegl, K. (1996). *The Robinsonade tradition in Robert Michael Ballantyne's The Coral Island and William Golding's The Lord of the Flies*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.

Trites, R. (1997). *Waking sleeping beauty: feminist voices in children's novels*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press.

Appendix

Annotated Bibliography of Novels Studied

The Boy Who Spoke Dog by Clay Morgan

During a violent storm Jack, the orphaned cabin boy of the *Patty B,* is tossed overboard tied to a bale of sheep's wool by the crew who hope this will ensure his survival. Jack washes ashore on an island populated by two packs of dogs, a flock of sheep, and the ruins of a homestead. During the story told alternatively from both Jacks point-of-view as well as that of one of the dogs, Jack slowly begins to befriend the pack of dogs that watch over the sheep and learns to fear the feral dogs that live in the woods. The solitude and his inability to provide for himself take a toll on Jack and he begins to lose his humanity and become more and more like the dogs he has befriended.

Call it Courage by Armstrong Sperry

Mafatu, the Boy Who Was Afraid, sets out on a journey with his dog, Uri, to prove to the villagers and his father that he does in fact have courage. After a storm they are stranded on an island and must survive both the wilderness and the cannibals who consider the island a sacred place, all the while building and provisioning a boat so they can make a triumphant return home.

A Girl Named Disaster by Nancy Farmer

Fleeing an arranged marriage to an old man, 12-year-old Nhamo begins a journey find her father. Along the way she must is stranded on a chain of islands in a great lake and must learn to live off of the land and to commune with the African spirits that guide her.

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen

On a flight to visit his father in Northern Canada, 13-year-old Brian is left alone in the airplane after the pilot dies of a heart attack. After safely crashing the plane in the Canadian wilderness, Brian learns how to survive with only his hatchet and the clothes on his back.

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell

Abandoned on the island when white men take her people away, 12-year-old Karana must learn to carry on using her wits and survival skills. She battles against wild dogs and her own feelings of loss and loneliness and manages to survive on the island alone for 18 years.

Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George

Torn between traditional Eskimo ways and Americanization, 13-year-old Julie, runs away from an arranged marriage and must discover how to survive in the Alaskan wilderness. To further her survival she learns to communicate with a pack of wolves and for a brief time becomes one of the pack and they become her family.

Sarah Bishop by Scott O'Dell

After her father and brother are killed during the Revolutionary War, 15-year-old Sarah Bishop, a fugitive from the British army, starts a new life for herself a secluded cave. Here she learns to survive on her own and makes companions of woodland creatures. After she is accused of being a witch she again begins to rely on the friendship of others when she is faced with the hatred and fear of her accusers.

Summer I Was Lost by Phillip Viereck

Following a disappointing school year in which is he taunted both by his fellow students and teachers for his poor athletic skill, 14-year-old Paul is sent to a wilderness camp by his parents. While there he begins to regain his confidence and begins to learn that physical strength and athletic skill are not the only way to achievement. While on a hike with a camp group he becomes separated during a storm and must learn to survive on his own using his wits and his newly acquired survival skills.

The Talking Earth by Jean Craighead George

Because of the disrespect that she shows for the traditional ways of the Seminole people, 13-year-old Billie Wind is sent out into the Florida Everglades to reconnect with Great Spirit and the other spiritual creatures of her people. After surviving a wildfire, she vows to not return home until she has met the little people and heard the animals talk. So, she sets off on a journey through the Everglades with her canoe and her animal companions looking for her path to enlightenment and home.

The Voyage of the Frog by Gary Paulsen

Fourteen-year-old David has just inherited the *Frog* from his uncle who died of cancer. He sets out on a short trip to find a good place to leave his uncle's ashes in the Pacific when he is struck by a sudden storm and loses his way. The book chronicles his fight to survive and return home with limited food and water, alone on the Pacific with only his wits and his memories of his uncle to guide him.

When Eagles Fall by Mary Casanova

Thirteen-year-old Alex is sent to spend some time with her father, an eagle expert, living in Northern Minnesota after almost dying from alcohol poisoning. In hopes of regaining her father's approval Alex attempts to remove a fishing lure from an eagle's

nest, but instead frightens an eaglet so badly that it falls from the nest and breaks its wing. She then sets out to take the eaglet to her father, but becomes trapped on an island following a violent storm. She now must provide food and shelter for both herself and the eaglet and try to find a way to be rescued quickly, so the eaglet can get medical attention.

Whichaway by Glendon and Kathryn Swarthout

Fifteen-year-old Whichaway, nicknamed because he didn't appear to have much direction in his life, rides out on horseback to check over windmills on his father's Arizona farm. While on the top of one of the windmills both his legs are broken after a dust devil swings him into the windmill's platform. He is now forced to come to terms with his life and decide whether or not he has the strength and courage required to get himself down from the windmill and whether or not he will grow up to be the man his father wants him to be or the man that he wants to be.